

My name is 56th sister. My older brothers and sisters, — and there are fifty-five of them-- call me 56th Younger Sister; my younger brothers and sisters, --and there are around thirty of them --- call me 56th Older Sister.

Our father is the Prince of Chung-shan and an elder brother of His Majesty the Emperor Wu-ti of Han. He loves us all very much but he does not get to see us very often. We have many mothers, though, and are never lonesome.

My mother is Father's chief consort, the Princess Tou Wan. I am her 12th child. My mother and father are cousins and were betrothed when they were children. My mother talks a good deal about the Palace of Eternal Faith, (Ch'ang-hsin-kung in Chinese,) where she and my father and his brothers used to play when they were children. That was in Ch'ang-an, the capital city far, far away to the west, beyond the bend of the mighty Yellow River. On holidays, mother says, they used to ride on royal ^{carriages} ~~palanquins~~, borne by stewards, and some of the boys would ride horseback, and go picnicking on one of the mountains that embrace Ch'ang-an on three sides. The tall cypresses and the many shrines mother saw on her way are deeply impressed in my mind.

I am thirteen years old and I am learning how to embroider, along with some of my older and younger sisters who can thread a needle. My brothers begin book-learning around the time their eighth birthday comes by. I am not supposed to study books because I am a girl, but I can't help over-hearing the masters as

they drone^{on} in their dull voices when I walk past the boys' school-room across the courtyard. In fact, I don't have to go to the master to do number puzzles. Once 58th Younger Brother who is just a year younger than I, secretly asked me to help him with a problem:

"A fast horse and a slow horse set out together on the 3000 li (a li is a Chinese mile) long journey from Ch'ang-an to Ch'i. The first day the fast horse travels 193 li, thereafter increasing his speed by 13 li each day. The slow horse covers 97 li the first day, and then reduces his speed by half a li each day. Meanwhile the fast horse reaches Ch'i and begins his return journey and sometime meets the slow horse. When do they meet, and how many li has each horse travelled?"

I did it without jotting any numbers down in the sand or scratching them onto bamboo or wood-slips. I can just work the numbers in my head the way I suppose you can imagine the size of a house just by looking at its front. Anyway, I told 58th Younger Brother the answer and promised never to reveal this to anyone. But I started thinking about that glorious place, Ch'ang-an, where Father and Mother grew up, and asked 58th Younger Brother to promise to make a map for me showing the Great Wall, the Yellow River, and Yangtze River (which is called Ch'ang-chiang in Chinese, meaning Long River, because it is the third longest river in the world), the city of Ch'ang-an and here, Chung-shan where we live, near the hilly town of Man-ch'eng.

I know that you are going to say that every other Chinese name is Ch'ang-something. Well, this is not so, although it may seem so to you now. Ch'ang means "long" or "eternal" and Ch'ang-an, our capital means Eternal Peace. So now you know: an means "peace", chiang means "river", and hsin means "faith". You may think our words are short, too, and you are right. Each word has only one sound. We have ideas which take two or more words to convey, but there is no single word that is two-sounds or more long; no words like ri-ver or hip-po-po-ta-mus. In Chinese "river" is ho or chiang, and a hippo is called a river horse, or ho-ma. Now you know more Chinese words.

Often when I sit alone in the garden under a pine tree, I lapse into day-dreams and wish I were in the expeditionary armies of my favorite uncle who is ruling China out of Ch'ang-an. He is sending troops and merchants way far away into Central Asia, across deserts and through mountain passes, on horseback and in camel caravan, to get more of those tall, swift handsome horses which sweat blood and run a thousand li a day. Bolt upon bolt of silk, shiny in the blazing sun like a kaleidoscope of a thousand patterns, are carried across the sands, as far as a barbarian kingdom called Rome, to be sold for cash.

Sometimes I wish I were a boy, and much older, so I could ride into Ferghana and exchange my little stout pony for one of those fleet steeds with those beautiful, oh so proudly arching necks! Father once put me on his knee and said I would get one when I became twelve. But he forgot and here I am already thirteen! And I am beginning to think I am only getting more younger brothers and sisters instead.

But my life is not without excitement. One night a palace lady woke me up and got me dressed saying I was to accompany Mother on a journey to Man-ch'eng Hill. It was scarcely dawn when we set out in horse-drawn carriages, all bundled up in hooded robes and blankets, with lanterns flailing on the sides of the carriages and the servants shushing the startled chickens and ducks from the courtyard by the carriage houses. Mother's carriage was in front and I was half asleep in the second one.

I woke up when the sun was mid-way up the first quarter. The horses were slowing down. In front of us was a low hill, with an unbelievable cave dug into it. Out of this cave came the sound of hammering and clanging. I was a bit frightened.

The convoy came to a halt in front of the hillside cave. Mother stepped off and walked back toward me.

"Come little treasure. Today is an auspicious day. The moon is in the first mansion and the work on my Future Dwelling is halfway near completion."

She took my hand in hers and enfolded me into her ample, warm bosom which smelled of silk and musk.

"Am I to live in your Future Dwelling, with you, Mother?" I asked, not knowing what I was saying.

"No, my sweet. You will have your own Future Dwelling. You will marry a mighty prince when you grow up, maybe one of your cousins in Ch'ang-an, and you may have your own glorious Future Dwelling which may be more sumptuous than mine. But look-----" She took me to the entrance of the cave.

It was enormous. The ceiling inside the giant rock-room was taller than our Palace ceiling, and I guess a thousand people could stand in it. The chief stone mason recognized Mother and immediately rushed forward and knelt down, bowing his head to the ground.

"Your Highness, truly this day is auspicious. The heavens cannot overlook the conjunction of your august visit, the moon coming into its first mansion, and our work reaching its exact midway point."

His assistants came forward with two silk cushions and spread them out one on top of the other and Mother lowered herself, sitting back on her legs. She looked about with critical eyes, up and down the enormous round cavern. The walls were glistening with moisture. I coughed and heard my echo. From the back wall to the entrance ran two, long, parallel gullies. I saw a little water in them. The foreman was busy explaining to Mother.

"The walls will be lined with embroidery here. From the two sides, leading to the north and south, we shall now commence digging long, narrow tunnels. The Main

Chamber will be in the center, there---there where Your Highness may see our marks for a door. There will also be a bath-annex, and an ^{walkway} ambulatory going around the Main Chamber and the Annex leading from one side door to the other. We have outlined the side-doors with preliminary chisel-marks, pending Your Highness's approval."

Mother thought for a while, looking through the rock with her mind's eye and said, "The Main Chamber shall be lined with stone slabs. I should like it fairly roomy. I hate congestion. There are some souvenirs very dear to me which I shall be taking..."

"Perhaps the Princess would like to look over the plan for the chamber?" he said and withdrew a roll of silk from inside his sleeve and, kneeling on the ground, spread it out before Mother. It was full of lines and marks in ink.

"The Main Chamber will have a tiled roof and stone walls. This is the ambulatory which encircles it and the Bath Annex, and these drainage ditches lead outward, here, to where we are now, and out into the well which shall be dug here."

Long tunnels were to be carved out to the north and to the south, so that the entire Future Dwelling in that solid-rock cave would look a bit like a cross. Mother told me she would live there when her body dies, and that she would be wearing a beautiful suit made entirely of jade, from head to foot, and sewn together in threads

of gold. Mother is very beautiful but when she is lain in this stone chamber her face will be covered in jade and her head will rest on a pillow carved out of jade. When I began to cry at the thought of not seeing Mother again, she comforted me saying she was not leaving for many more years. These were only the preparations. The jade suit would take our master jadesmith ten years to make, so he would soon be coming to the palace to take the preliminary measurements. On the journey home I squeezed into Mother's palanquin, to be closer to her.

Suddenly the convoy stopped and one of the drivers dismounted and picked up something off the ground. It was a part of the inlay which decorates our carriage, and made of pure gold. It shone in the sun and I asked mother if I could have it---it was my sign--the dragon, and it was a proud little dragon with one forefoot up and his head held high. Mother thought that was terribly silly, but let me keep it.

Dragons are all over our house, actually. They curl up and play with one another, often in gold and silver, crawling over large bronze wine vessels. Father has a very beautiful one which he got when he was very little in Ch'ang-an. It had once belonged to the kitchen of the King of Ch'u, way to the south where the Yangtze meanders through deep gorges. How my heart yearns to fly to Ch'u, where immortals cavort with dancing cranes and where so many magic herbs grow.

You may well ask how I have fallen in love with Ch'u, having never seen it with my own eyes. But oh I see Ch'u in Father's large bronze wine vessel, I see Ch'u in all

our lacquer dinner service and in the indescribably beautiful silks, embroidered in all colors with flying forms which twist and turn in space in some magic arabesque. And whenever some food is particularly delicious, pungent with garlic and pepper, the Palace servants would tell me that it was a Ch'u recipe. One very old nurse comes from Ch'u, and often in the evenings I would summon her to tell me about that wonderful country with its strange tunes, its orange orchards, its breathtaking mountains and rivers.

One day Mother's jadesmith came with samples of the stone, and with a tape measure for the first fitting. She chose a handsome, darkish jade of a brown and green hue, imported from thousands of miles away. It felt smooth to the touch, and grew warm in the hand, as I held a small piece. The mysterious markings looked like rivers or wisps of clouds floating, changing, emerging and disappearing. The suit was to be made of several thousand small flat pieces, oblongs and squares, triangles where need be, to fit the contours of the body. And each thin slab is to be drilled with a tiny hole in each corner, so that threads woven of twelve strands of gold will connect the pieces, in knots of nine styles. "The tunic of Your Highness will be criss-crossed in gold piping," I heard the jadesmith say, but did not understand.

Mother was seated in a strange way and said sharply, "Take it out. It's enough. It's enough." She was addressing the physician who had inserted several acupuncture needles into her side and arm and was quietly twirling them. I had not noticed him in all the excitement over the new jade from distant lands. Now

he withdrew two gold and one silver needles which were rather long. I felt ill in my stomach but rushed to embrace Mother. "Are you alright? Why do you let him do this to you?" "Shush, darling. It works wonders, this therapy. Only I can't take it for long periods at a time. I simply cannot live without acupuncture. Ever since I started treatment I have never had a headache and my asthma never recurred." "May the Palace Physician keep you away from the jade suit for a long, long time," I thought urgently.

In one of Mother's rooms there is a tall bronze lamp in the shape of a lovely Palace maid-servant kneeling on the floor and holding a lamp. She wears a green garment and her head, separately cast, has the hair done back in the manner of servants, her face is young and attractive. It is as if someone had copied that face from life. Evenings I like to watch them light the lamp and adjust its rotating hood to control the light-intensity and its direction. No soot or smoke comes out of it as these are funnelled up through the sleeve and end in the hollow of the body. It comes from the Palace of Eternal Faith, that of Mother's and Father's Grandmother in Ch'ang-an. Mother says she can't decide whether to give it to me for a dowry, as it had been given to her, or to take it along into her magnificent Future Dwelling, the cave-tomb near Man-ch'eng. Mother is very fond of that lamp. So one day I said to her, lying, "Mother, the lamp should accompany you into the next world. I don't like it." From that day on her doubts were resolved and I was proud I could so easily make her happy.

Another strange thing Mother will take with her is a little bronze censer shaped like a magic mountain and supported by a little boy sitting next to a tiger, the White Tiger of the West, Green Dragon of the East and the Red Phoenix of the South are carved marching around this holy mountain. Every Day Mother's women put incense in it and smoke comes out to perfume the room. When I was little I used to go very close to it and try to swallow the smoke and ended up coughing and sputtering every time, to the merriment of the Palace ladies in waiting.

Death and funerals are very important to us, and for the mysterious Next World everything is done in preparation for a happy and joyous and full one. Father's tomb will have carriages and horses and the foods and wines he loves so much. Father dies in the fourth year of Ylan-ting which is 113 B.C. in your language. Mother will follow him within ten years. And I will be married and live a rich and full life like my parents.

T'ANG CULTURE

In my house there are always different things. Sometimes I see golden goblets which look like something from off the back of one of those camels from Central Asia, from the far-away kingdom of Sassania, and then there are times I see our own silks woven in foreign patterns; flutes inlaid with mother-of-pearl, depicting a wandering minstrel playing as he reclines on a camel's back; glass pitchers with eagles' heads on top; or some fantastic horn-shaped drinking cups which must come from a foreign country, carved out of some stone, perhaps agate, and in the shape of a ram with its head tipped back.

The fact is that when you live in Ch'ang-an, in the early 8th century, you are living in the very center of the universe, the only brilliant place when the rest of the world is covered in darkness. Everyone from everywhere seems to be here in Ch'ang-an. They say there are one million people living within our great walls now, plus another million tilling the fields beyond the walls. Such may be the case - my counting is very basic - but I do bump into people very easily on the streets, I can tell you that.

Our city is the first pre-planned city in the world, and it is the largest. It was begun in the Sui dynasty, around the 580's in your time, that was more than one thousand years before the Declaration of Independence, and finished under our emperors in the T'ang. The city is six miles long and over five miles wide and it is divided into several different sectors. In the north, central to the city, is the Palace City which takes about one-ninth of the city's space. Then, south of it, comes the Administrative City where all the civilservants go to work after the Dawn Audience with the emperor. Around these two central areas the city of Ch'ang-an forms a u-shape filled with residences of the noble, the wealthy and the powerful. I see a lot of them as my father is a jewel merchant from the West Market. He is consulted by the aristocrats and the rich alike.

CH'ANG-AN CULTURE

Here is a map of our city and here is the West Market. The East Market is right across town from the West Market. The markets are not too far from the Palace City and the Administrative City, not too far from us either. Our house is three blocks from the Market, one street away from the central avenue which leads the visitor from the south of the city to the Administrative City. This is the grandest avenue in town, called Vermillion Sparrow, and it is 500 feet wide, which is quite wide when you realize a football playing field is 300 feet long.

Recently the Empress Dowager Wu-hou returned to her ancestors and my father was called upon to find all manner of exotic for the aristocrats to send to the court. Her son, the emperor, who is now reigning, seems a gentler sort of ruler, and spends a lot of his energy either creating giant royal mausoleums or training horses to dance to music.

Mausoleum is an artificial mountain made on top of a tomb. The emperor not only gave his mother a tremendous funeral which put the city in several days of obligation mourning, he also made an enormous underground palace for his daughter the Princess Yung-t'au, another one for his son the Crown Prince I-teh, and last year one for his brother the Crown Prince Chang-huai.

I have some friends a few blocks away whose fathers make tomb figurines for the nobles. That is worlds of fun. You take a clay slaop and pour it into pottery moulds of horses, horsemen, elegant ladies, musicians, camels, what have you and when the clay hardens you take it out and either put it in the kiln as is, to decorate with pigments afterward, or you can put a few coats of glaze on first in which case the figurine will come out glossy and shiny. I like

the painted ones better because you can see all manner of little things, such as buttons, and flowers on the garments, which you can't make with a glaze. Many of them get their eyes painted on afterwards anyway.

These are not for playing with. We are not allowed to keep them in our rooms, even the ones with flaws which won't be sold. Because they are for the dead and it is very bad luck to treat them as objects for the living. I wanted so much to have a pottery mounted hunter holding a falcon. My friend's father had thrown it in the waste bin because a bit of the falcon had been nicked. I adore falcons and can't resist their graceful flight and their sharp swoop as they dive down to hunt their prey. I put my hand to the figurine but my friend slapped it sharply. The hunter dropped to the ground, crashing into a hundred pieces. "You must not touch such things," he said, and I was afraid. This is how it had looked once.

I went along to watch the workmen paint the tombs, too, when my parents let me. I learn a lot from watching and helping the grown-ups at their trades. We are merchants and my parents can't afford to let me go to school and compete for the examinations which would have given me a chance at a government job to serve the emperor. I like riding and travelling and I love people, and shall inherit my father's shop. There will be many opportunities to ride out to Lan-ch'eng in the northwestern desert and visit the cave temples of a thousand Buddhas, and go on caravans.

Anyway a few times I often carried boxes containing azurite and cinnabar and malachite, all ground into powder from minerals to be used as colors for the tomb-paintings. In the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai they painted two rows of ladies-in-waiting, one at either side looking toward the center. Very briskly the master-draftsman

sketched the shapes with a charcoal marker, one by one the beautiful faces appeared. The helpers began to go over the sketch-lines with ink-brushes. Still another group of helpers brushed on the colors. The master himself finally took the brush and painted in the features, dotting the thoughtful eyes, finishing the modest mouths and full cheeks - doing also most of the hands. "Look, third uncle, there is a young man here, the last one on the left is a man!" I said, thinking I had found an error.

No, silly, of course it is not. No man is allowed in the inner courts of the Royal Princess. This is one of the ladies-in-waiting dressed as a man, to entertain them. Girls get a bit bored, you know, when they are that age and there is no man in their lives."

"Is that all they do, the young ladies, - walk around inside their palaces?" I asked.

"Oh, no. They go riding to picnics, they play games like double-sixes, they make music in ensemble groups, they sing and dance and some do a bit of writing and painting. They also play polo on horseback. Just as fiercely as the men. Cousin Chi-jung who works inside the Palace City tells how they would go galloping over hill and dale, jump over rocks and dodge tall trees, all in hot pursuit of their ball. They play polo all day long, always accompanied by several camels galloping all alongside packed with picnic baskets. Sometimes they need extra little boys around and pick up the stray ball. Would you like me to recommend you?"

"Would I!" I shouted, "I would adore it."

All the great royal tombs are outside the city and to go along with the painters means being gone for the full day, leaving our street before sun-rise and returning after sundown. My father always considers the days I help uncle Liu's holidays. He did not let me take too many of them. There was so much work to be done in the shop.

Everything on the shelves had to be polished or dusted every day, even all the shelves. Things came and went so fast that you have to know your way about quite well. We also do a sort of custom-order business for our clients. The members of the guild of ceramicists and the members of the guild of weavers. Both of these groups make the most elegant things, and very often merchants from the far west, from the Kingdom of Sassanid Persia, send orders to have bowls made with parrots among peonies, or damask woven with Persian archers twisting back in their saddles and stretching their bows - all enclosed in a circle of pearls... The guild craftsmen here all know how to make these foreign designs very well. Nowadays there are as many foreign designs as there are Chinese designs everywhere you look, up and down the streets.

The aristocrats and the wealthy especially favour imported motifs. They drink western grape-wine. The ladies put up their hair in twin top knots and have dresses with low cut fronts just like the foreign ladies.

When you walk around the streets, especially near the markets, you hear all kinds of exotic music - the double reeds pinched and piquant in melancholic tunes, or clapping of cymbals, usually accompanying someone twirling madly in a frenzied desert dance. There are fortune-tellers, jugglers, and people who make you see things which really aren't there. I saw one of them throw a bowl onto the ground and saw the thousands of pieces come together again and the bowl grew back into one piece. I never knew how it was done, or what actually did, or did not happen. My parents don't want me to go the Persian Bazaar - as we jokingly call the Western Market - because of the tricksters and pick-pockets. We have heard about them, but I have not seen one so far. I am curious about all these things and often go secretly without telling my people at home where I am. Some of the merchants at the Western Market have turbans and dark, glistening skins. Their eyes are very,

very shiny and look straight into you, and through you. Their noses are extremely large and have bumps on them. There are people with leathery skins and long braids. They wear colorful long skirts and boots. There are those with very curly short hair who wear earrings and drape their bodies with long cloths. All of these people smell different. Their cooking smells different too.

In the olden days before the Grand Canal was built, it was very rare that we ate rice. Rice is grown in the south - in the valley of the great Yangtze River. We usually eat millet and noodles. Since the Grand Canal was finished we can see cartloads upon cartloads of rice, in enormous sacks, pulled by donkeys, come into the city gates fresh from off boats that had come up to the Yellow River from the Yangtze. I think it is very clever to make a river where you need one. Boats can carry so much more cargo than donkey-carts. Even so, the donkeys and mules often have to pull the barges from the shore. You see them kitched to long ropes driven in teams. Always, Always, goods flow. The whole world seems to move on commerce. My father is in the midst of this exciting world and I am proud of him. He brings things to peoples at opposite ends of the world.

I even heard one night that he was gathering things which our emperor would send to the emperor of Japan. Many of the things are made here in the middle kingdom. Many others have the flavour of foreign lands. Here is a chess table that is very ingenious. When the host opens this drawer, a mechanical devise opens the drawer at the guest's side automatically. Here is a lute which has Central Asian musicians painted on it - singing and dancing on an elephant. I know just how that music sounds.

One night our cousin who works in the Palace City came over for dinner. We sat in a circle listening to incredible stories of goings on at the court. The emperor, he said, has a team of drill masters

who have trained some of the horses from the imperial stables to dance to music. One of the wine servers had told him the following story: During a banquet for a foreign mission, the son of Heaven ordered the dancing horses to entertain the guests. The musicians came in, took their seats and began to play. The horses were all bedecked with ribbons of the five colors as well as gold and silver. At the sound of the music, began to dance, moving gracefully to the beat of the music. In the middle of the music the musicians paused, and the horses stopped, standing stock still. Each musician then went forward and offered a golden bowl, filled with wine, to one horse. Each horse took the bowl of wine into his mouth and politely sat down to drink it, and then stood up again. The musicians resumed playing - the horses fell in step and picked up the dance from where they had left off. "Amazing", my father said. "But entirely true," third uncle said, "In fact the guests all gave a sigh in disbelief - the court painter was ordered to make a painting of the event, to be engraved in gold upon a silver flash."

"I hope I may get the contract for the goldsmiths." father said. "You may very well," said third uncle, "It is for the Prince of Pin. Don't you sometimes get orders from his highness?" "I do at that", father said happily, "I do indeed." "I must go home now, dear cousin", third uncle said "the night is upon us and I must be ready for the dawn audience tomorrow. I have been shifted to work at the southern gate of the Palace City. In the mornings when all the officials arrive on their horses I have to be there to help them dismount and take off their outer coats. These winter nights are bitter cold and the wee hours before sunrise are terrible. We can hardly keep our lanterns lit, with the freezing wind." "Third uncle, does his Majesty the emperor get up that early?" Why, I asked. "The son of Heaven leads his people by imperial example, silly," third uncle said with a smile, "He rises in the dark and awaits his ministers. At the first

ray of sunrise the waterclock announces the hour and the giant palace gates are swung open. The officials are led through the courtyards to the audience chamber. When they are all seated according to rank his majesty enters from a side door and ascends the throne - another day is begun. His majesty begins the day." "What about breakfast? What do the officials do after dawn audience?" Really, cousin, your son is terribly ignorant." third uncle chided father. "He can not have a better instructor in these matters than yourself, worthy cousin. I will only be telling him hear-say. You can give the eye-witness account. I am afraid you must stay a while longer tonight and tell your tale."

Very well, then - you merchants do have the sharpest tongues. Uncle was kind and in good humour, and I could see he loved telling us about such important things. You see, silly, the ministers and officials don't always ride to the palace from their own homes and mansions. Very often, when the business of state is ~~xxxx~~ serious most of the time - they eat and sleep in their offices right there in the Administrative City. They work from morning to night. The emperor has had times when he signed five hundred items into law in a single day. I am glad our boy will not be a civil servant, mother said, I do not wish to see him work to death. Everyone laughed.

But they do have long vacations and go away into the mountains for summer. Their life is not all drudgery, you know. I happened to know an official named Huang. He is very generous and often stops to give me a nod or a word. I used to wait on him in his examination days and have won his favour. I will never forget the time when he and thousands of young men like him came into Ch'ang-an to take the final - the imperial examination - all hoping for a glorious future. I was a young lad working at one of the inns. Here comes young Master Huang, weary after a thousand mile journey from Wu. He looked lonely and a bit frightened to be in the capital city for the first time. I told him there were several other candidates for the examinations staying at the inn

and that he should find companionship soon. I just wanted to say something che-ring. He responded immediately and asked if I would bring a bowl of noodles to his room. He would wash - rest for the night without further activity. I went out and got him a large bowl of noodles and took it upon myself to bring also a small crock of rice wine, gently heated. He was delighted that he invited me to share a drink with him. That is how we became friends. We are the same age. After his examinations I took him to the Great Wild Goose Pagoda in the southeastern part of the city. He and hundreds of other successful candidates, now assured of a good life, climbed up and inscribed their names, some also with funny verse. I remember a most beautiful young entertainer who sang exotic songs and once went with him and some other scholars on a boating trip on Serpentine Lake down there at the southeastern tip of the city. I had packed a big picnic basket for them. Waited on the shores but all the while I could hear her singing... Silly is too young for this kind of talk and the night is getting dark and you DO have dawn duty at the gate tomorrow, dear cousin, mother said, rising. I was most sorry to see third uncle go. I understood everything he was saying. Only mother thought I did not understand. In the city you know everything ^{oh} by the time you are twelve. Anyway now I know ~~how~~ how third uncle knows so much. He hears often from Mr. Huang who now has a post right in the administrative city, after some fifteen years in his native province of Wu.

Anyway, my heart is not in the Palace City, nor the Administrative. I will be a great traveller and go west on a camel caravan, to get the golden peaches from Samarkand.

YANGSHAO CULTURE

When the sun crawls over the horizon it pierces through a slash in our earthen wall and sends a shaft of brilliant light across our hut onto the wall just above where I lay curled in sleep. I wake up instantly. This is a secret between my friend the sun, and myself, my friend wakes me up and I tiptoe past the little ones and step outside to stretch my limbs and take some very deep breaths.

Our house is round. There are many like ours, with a cone-shaped thatched roof supported by four wooden pillars inside. The fireplace is in the center of the house, usually, just beneath where the roof is tallest. Some houses are square and their roofs come down on four sides in triangles. When I am tall enough I shall help the grown-ups with the thatching. Now I do things closer to the ground.

For two seasons I have been putting seeds into furrows in the soft, moist earth. I walk behind the grown-ups, following a long furrow next to theirs, and do as they do putting the seeds not too close, not too far apart, not too deep and not too shallow, but just right. Just as they do. Then we close the furrows and go home and pretty soon my friend the sun sends our other friend the rain to wet the soil. Oh how I love the smell of the sweet earth, warm and moist. I sometimes slip away from the grown-ups, when it rains, and crawl up a leafy tree so I can breathe the deep perfume and listen as rain drops plop onto resilient, shiny leaves.

No one told me, but I know that the sun and the rain will coax the stalks to break out of their little seeds and to come through the earth and grow, and produce grains and vegetables. I am crazy for sweet yams and for chestnuts. I love to dig yams and climb trees for large quantities of chestnuts which Mother lets me

keep in a small storage urn suspended in one corner of our house. She bakes the yams in the hearth, and makes delicious cereals from the grains we plant.

We keep pigs and dogs to eat for feasts. There are many feasts when the entire village dances and sings. I guess that next to the smell of a barbecue.

Our village has many houses, and around it there is a deep ditch, 18 feet deep and as wide, to keep wild beasts from our ancestors lie buried under the sweet earth, together with some pretty urns filled with grains. When someone dies and lies very still and stiff, his family will carry the lifeless body across the deep ditch into the northern village for the ancestors. I am a little frightened to see the body, a greyish white, lost in eternal sleep, and the weeping around it too, makes me sad.

I much prefer the east to the north. To the east is where they make all manner of pots out of clay. I love to go along and squeeze lumps of dampened clay between my fingers and hear it go oosh. Now and then they let me put something I make into the kiln, when the kiln has a little spot left in a corner. But I know how they make their pots and urns and dishes. All you do is roll the clay between your palms, or onto a stone slab, until you get a long, long rope of it, like a thin snake. Then you coil it round and round, and shape it anyway you like as the walls get higher.

The easiest shape is a bowl, since you can stop before the walls get wobbly. The elders make deep, broad dishes, long urns with narrow mouths and pointed bottoms. Some make deep bowls and shallow bowls with flaring lips.

We decorate them in two ways. For the more fancy serving dishes we use black pigment from the earth and paint on a smooth and polished

surface. For the less important pots and most of the cooking pots we decorate the surface with impressed designs. Here they let me do some of the decoration. Once they wrapped a rope around a stick and told me to beat a tall bowl over the upper half of the belly. ^{I could either roll it over the pot, or I could} "But do it gently, evenly", they said. The clay was leather-hard. I was so eager that I punched the side in and ruined the pot. It was a few weeks before they let me try again. This time I did it better, ^{I rolled it and for variation began to beat it and} and heard that pok, pok, pok sound the elders make when they beat the pots. In time I learned to beat the pot as evenly as they, in the same even lovely rhythm.

We also wrap the pots in linen for the textile impression, or simply cover the upper half of the body with our thumb-nail print, which can be very pretty too. Some pots are left to dry on basket-mats or linen mats, and their bottoms have the imprint from the basket or linen weave, in herringbone or in straight weave. There are oh so many ways you can decorate a pot.

Here is a picture of some of the pots we make to hold food and liquids. If they look a little broken to you it is because they are six thousand years old, made some four thousand years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Although we keep pigs and dogs around and fatten them for food, we like to hunt wild game to eat too. I have my own bow made of a pliant wood, and I use arrows tipped with bone, even stone. I also have a spear and harpoon for fishing. I wade into the river which is so tickly and clear and when I stand very still large fish swim by me in groups. I pick out one, hardly moving my eyes and, when I have chosen it, swing my arm around and pierce it in the belly through the flank. Then I slow down my motion and make sure that the harpoon is all the way through the fish so he won't wiggle off again and swim away. When I have him securely on my harpoon I walk out onto

the bank and put it in a large basket with a cover, woven by the elders. I think these days the elders are noticing how much food I am bringing back to the village. I think perhaps soon they are going to see that I shall become an adult, too.

When it's colder I sit on the bank and fish with a hook suspended on a long thread. This too requires sudden and fast motion, jerking the fish out of the water before he gets loose. We have a variety of fishes from our great river, given us by heaven, and we paint many of them on our better pottery dishes.

I never told anyone I prefer meat to fish, mainly because I eat fast and tend to pierce my cheek with fishbones. The elders do not do this, but remove whole sections of bone in tact, placing them neatly to one side. I love roast venison more than hare. We have hunted deer, leopard, horse, wild cattle, antelope, marmot and the fierce rhinoceros. Oh it can be terribly frightening when the rhinoceros turns around and decides to hunt you.

I was in a group of elders and bigger boys, hunting the wild leopard when we came across an enormous shino. He was grazing under a large tree and several birds were grazing, or pecking, on top of him. "Meat for our fire and glue for our bowls", one of the elders shouted and started a charge toward the rhino. We followed, all shouting and brandishing our spears. Someone fired an arrow which just went into the thick hide a tiny bit, enough to irritate the giant beast. He turned around and glowered at us, pawing the ground with his enormous hoof. Soon he lowered his head and began to charge, galloping toward us. We scattered, all crying in panic. I dropped my spear and bow and scampered up the nearest tree, armed only with my quivver. The rhino decided to get me and came at the tree with all his might, crashing against it. I nearly fell off but hung on, hard. After a while I regained my balance but the beast charged my tree

again, having backed away a good distance first, and taking careful aim. Will my body lie next to those of my ancestors tomorrow, I thought softly when once more all his weight came crashing against my slender tree at terrific speed. But this time all the villagers closed in on him from three sides and twenty spears went into the giant at once, amid crazed shouts. I closed my eyes and held my breath til all was quiet.

That evening by the large fire the elders were laughing and saying they would bring me along to all future hunts as decoy. I was still shaking from the experience and mother said in a stern voice, "That is enough. The boy is tired". I was.

In winter we spend more time indoors, making pottery and tools. No one can have his own tool until he has made several. And that is the most difficult thing of all, for me. I have no patience and cannot sit for hours bending over a piece of stone, slowly grinding it down to a smooth surface and then spend another umpteen hours polishing it to a high gloss. But that is the way we have to make our tools. There are many, many different types. But all are carved carefully and polished. Most of them are tied onto wooden handles with rope strings, usually through holes which we have to make.

My first hole-making day was not a happy one. I had already spent several days previously polishing a hoe, rounded at one end and straight at the other, until it shone like my friend, the sun. It shinned like a black sun. One of the elders gave me a stone cone, long and pointed sharply at one end, with a bowl of sand.

"Now hold the cone upright and sim right here", he said, aiming it in the middle of the straight side, some distance from the edge. "Add some sand when you have twirled around for a bit and made a small dent. It will go faster once you get started.

I followed instructions and the point kept slipping off the smooth surface. Over and over again it slipped off the shiny surface scratching it. "I should have left the polishing till the very last", I thought bitterly. The week-long rain had cleared and I longed to run outside. But I held to my job and twirled the cone. My palms got hot and I thought I smelled something burning. It was only the heat of my palms rubbing together. The stone cone, too, was burning hot. At last the smallest indentation was visible on the smooth surface of my first hoe and with a sigh of relief I added some fine sand powder and continued to twirl my stone drill. Now the hole got bigger faster. In time I had made a tiny cone-shaped bowl in my hoe. "Look!" I said. The elder who instructed me came over and nodded approvingly. Soon you will reach the midway point. Then you must turn the hoe around and work from the other side.

The sun beckoned to me urgently. The clouds had all cleared and the air was fresh and crisp as it came wafting through our shop. I turned my hoe around and place my "drill" down, this time with confidence, and began to twirl it with vigour, whistling as I thought of the outdoor games I would play. Actually it was mid-afternoon when I started the other side, and my drilling did not have any appreciable effect till after sun down. At last, after disappointment and exhaustion had set in, I felt a strange click and the cone sank suddenly deeper, faster - it had borne through! Look! I shouted again, somewhat nervously.

The elder walked toward me kindly. He had a strange look on his face - a look that seemed to suggest he knew something I didn't. Proudly I turned my hoe around and held it aloft. Every face was turned toward it and a silence fell over the room. I gasped in anguish and disbelief. The two holes were not aligned! The point of the second side came out at the edge of the first!

The elders turned away shaking their heads. A few of the older boys laughed out loud and I resented it very much. Then I realized that they were only remembering their own first mistakes.

We make stone tools, earthen pottery, we cook fish, meats and grains, and we weave our clothing out of hemp leaves and silk-worm filaments.

For weaving the first thing we do, in spring, is to twist the filament into threads. Whether they come from hemp leaves, peeled into the tinnest filaments, or from those unwound off a silk cocoon, we twist several strands into a thread using a thoothed whorl made of stone such as this one. The whorl is attached to the bottom of a long wooden spindle, so the filaments won't slip off once they are put through the tiny teeth.

For linen we cut off the stems of the sissle plant and soak them for many, many days and nights. Then we separate the fibers from the pulp by beating large handfuls against sharp rocks. Then they are soaked again, and once more, they are dragged through comb-like tools to loosen the pulp and once more they are soaked - then only the filaments are left.

The silk takes longer to make, because first we must raise the silkworms from the eggs of last year which have been stored away on large leaves. In spring the little white dots, - the eggs - first turn black. And before you know it, one day you see the black dots change into black threads, tiny, tiny ones, crawling about the leaves. Then you rush out and gather armloads of sweet, baby mulberry leaves and spread them out gently on top of the baby silkworms. Soon they find their way on top of the leaves, and in a while you will see tiny holes grow bigger in the mulberry leaves. That is the silk worms eating their first meal.

Everyday we give them more mulberry leaves, and remove the dried up leaves to the fireplace. By and by the little black threads grow longer. In time they become less black and more white. In time, when the mulberry leaves have grown bigger, shiny in a darker green, the silkworms too have grown to the size of my small finger, and are mostly white. I like to watch them flow across the tray on hundred of little white furry feet-points. Now their eating is very noisy, and the whole village is alive with the sound of their eating, like the sound of a hailstorm.

We put them on increasingly larger basket trays. One day when it is very hot, when the harvest is nearly in, we see them become very, very fat and wiggly and shiny. Light seems to go through them. Wiggly jelly fingers of light.

Then we know the time has come and we make little houses for them out of straw. Little teepee-shaped things so they can crawl on them and fix their cocoon there between the stalks. One by one the silkworms settle on the straw houses and begin turning their little heads in the air, round and round, and the invisible silk filament which comes from their mouth is fastened onto the straw. In time you see the vaguely, through the transparent white fog of their silk, still spinning their cocoon. Larger and larger the cocoon grows. Then all is quiet - the very last cocoon is made. It is so strange to walk down into the house to hear no more the continuous hailstorm but to see rows and rows of white cocoons fastened to the straw, in the great silence.

The elders decide on the right day to draw the silk and big vats of boiling water are prepared and the cocoons are picked off the straw stands and brought out to the water. Many of the cocoons are left to become silk moths so they will mate and lay eggs for next year.

The elders place cocoons into the boiling water and turn them around until they find the starting filament and then they pull carefully, carefully, and thousands of feet of silk can come off a single cocoon. These filaments too are spun into thread, on spindles fitted with toothed whorls at the bottom. When all the silk is collected the village has a feast, with singing, dancing and eating of meat. On such nights I go to bed with my belly slightly too full. I curl up by the wall and go to sleep with grease around my mouth, and with no worries at all. I know that next morning my friends the sun will wake me up again and another day will bring other excitement.

#####

The earliest farmers in China made their dishes and bottles out of clay, entirely by hand. There are several ways of making pottery by hand. Let us try some of them.

Take a lump of clay, as much as your hands can hold easily, and pound it back and forth to get out the air bubbles. Then roll it into a large ball. Now press both thumbs, together, and into the clay ball and you have made a hole in it. Or, a very thick bowl. Now you can work the sides of the bowl, keeping both thumbs on the inside, and gradually make the walls thinner.

Is it very lumpy? Try to smooth out the walls as much as possible. Now you can make the bottom flat by placing your bowl on the working surface and turn it a bit, pressing down gently. The bottom will flatten out. You must always help with your fingers, inside and outside the bowl. DO you like the shape? If you do, let it harden just a tiny bit, and then let's put on some decoration.

Hold the bowl in your left hand and slowly, evenly, put your right thumbnail into the side, in rows all around. Repeat this process several times until the upper half of the bowl is covered with little half-moon-like marks, made by your thumbnail!

Now let the bowl dry very slowly, in a slightly damp place, until Teacher is ready to fire it.



Neolithic Planting

How did the early farmers of China discover Agriculture? Let us pretend we don't know about it and see what happens.

Let's put some grains of wheat into some warm damp soil and keep in the dark for a few days. You can get live wheat seeds from the healthfood stores. They are guaranteed to sprout.

ANother fun thing to do is to sprout beans for your salad. You can take a handful of mung beans, or soy beans, (also see your health food store)- and simply put them in a bottle. Several times a day flush with water and lay on its side. In time you will see what the early farmers saw..

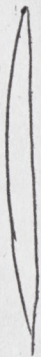
Neolithic

Bone Hair pin and/or harpoon

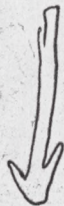
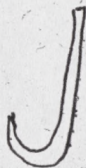
Next time you have roast beef or steak and see a largish bone ask Mom to let you keep it for a project.

Wash it and hammer it with a sharp stone (we are in the New Stone Age, remember?) until only the thickest part of it is there.

Now you can whittle it and polish it, with stones and sand, until you have a bone hairpin, sharp at both ends, like this, which was stuck in the chignon---you can have many of these coming out of a chignon,-- or you can make a fish hook, like this, or a harpoon, like this.



hairpin



Neolithic

Spinning thread.

We can make clothes without machines because we can weave fabric without machines. Fabric is made by many threads being woven together in one of several criss-cross patterns. We will make thread.

Take the spindle we have made out of a stick attached through a stone ~~whorl~~ whorl with a toothed edge. Take a large lump of raw wool or cotton wool and pull on it, tugging repeatedly until you have a kind of thread coming out of it.

Attach it to the spindle this way and ~~x~~ when it is secure, give the spindle a big twist. It will spin in the air, dangling from your hand, and the wool will be pulled into thread and wound around the spindle, like this.

Now you have "hand-made thread" which is not too even, but which is very precious today, because it is hand-made, made by you.

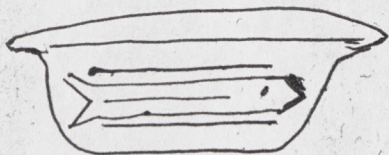
One way to make pottery by hand is by coiling. Takec Roll clay on your work surface and make it into a long, even sausage, a ~~xxxx~~ long rope of clay that is as even as possible.

Now coil the rope around itself. You are making a disk. That is the base. When the base is large enough bring the coil slightly above the edge of the base and you are raising the walls. In this way you can make enormous pots, large enough to hide yourself in. Just keep on adding new clay ropes when you run out.

Most of the work is in smoothing out the walls once you have made your shape. It can be a low dish, like this, or a bottle, like this. Let's make both.

We can decorate in different ways too. When the surface of your pots are perfectly smooth and you have made them practically shiny, you can paint them. Let's paint the low dish with some black slip, that is clay with a lot of iron rust in it. First let it dry completely. So the slip will stick. Use a brush like this and be careful not to drip.

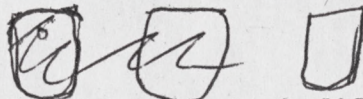
Let us decorate the bottle with fabric. While it is still damp, just after you finish making it, wrap it in some burlap, very tight, and gently paddle the sides with a wooden spoon, and you will make the burlap pattern sink into the wall of your bottle, like this. When you have covered the upper half, you can let the bottle dry out slowly in a damp place, ~~whenxyour~~ until ready to fire.



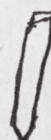
neolithic: stone hoe.

Let's make a tool for gardening. Let us make a hoe out of stone the way the Chinese farmers did 6,000 years ago.

Choose a large flattish stone and first chip it around the edges until you get this hoe shape.



Now begins a long process of polishing and filing. Let us do it the way they did it then. Take another stone and some sand and polish the edges, adding sand now and then, until they are smooth.



Now we must find a stone stick which comes to a point like a pencil.

If this is not around we must make such a piece, out of stone, to be used as our drill. You can sharpen a stone stick the way we sharpen knives on a whetting stone, adding water.

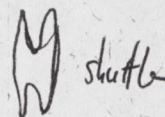
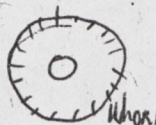
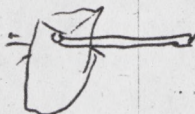
When you have your stone drill, aim it closer to the straight edge of your hoe and start twirling it between your palms, adding sand for abrasive, until you have "drilled" half way through the hoe. Then turn it around and aim very carefully so your holes will meet.



Now you are ready to polish the entire surface of your stone hoe until both sides shine,

Now you fasten the hoe to a wooden handle, tying a ~~ropexthnonghxtkexhndem~~ Find a wooden stick that is strong as well as ~~smenkn~~ and sharpen and point so that it fits into the hole of your hoe.

You can strengthen this by tying rope around both sides of the hole, like this.



P.S. The best way to make sure you hve a FLAT piece is to make it out of a very large stone, by driving a stone wedge through, from both sides,

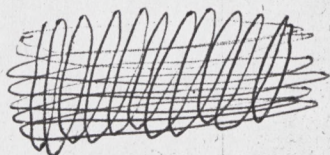
Let us weave a tablemat. We can make it out of palm leaves, straw and such basket-like material, or we can weave it out of the wool threads we have just made. The method is the same. Let us make a straight weave.

First we must make some sort of a frame, out of wooden sticks. We find and cut straight branches down to the size we want: two long ones and two shorter ones for a table-mat size oblong.

Now loop the thread, very evenly, over the longer edges, ~~xfxxxxx~~ until the oblong is covered with evenly spaced threads running the long way. Some will be on top and some will be on the bottom. Tie the two ends of the thread securely.

~~Nowmwhkxaxshukhixpuxhaxwammadaxmfmbmm~~

Wind as much as possible of the left-over thread onto the bone shuttle you have made. Now you are ready to "weave". Pass the shuttle through the warp threads, going over the ~~bakk~~ top thread and under the bottom thread--so that they change positions, across to the other side. You have woven one row. Now turn the shuttle back and go back again, again going under the bottom thread and over the top. You will be making hundreds of tiny crosses. And when you have covered the warp thread with your weft threads and gone to the other end of the frame, you will have made a beautiful table-mat.



Neolithic Cord-marked pottery

Make a tall bowl such as this one. THick and strong, from coiled ropes of clay. Smooth it all out on the inside. SMOOTH out the outside too.

~~TakmaxaxnspamxWimf~~ Wind a rope around a stick until a good part of the stick is covered. Hold the bowl securely and gently tap it all around with the rope-stick. The impressions from the rope will the the bowl a lively design. This is the very earliest way to decorate pottery, used by the rirst potters in south China, southeast Asia and Japan.

In ancient China,

Little girls from good families learned to sew and embroider while their brothers learned to read and write. We will make some embroidery which we can then applique on a dress or jacket as pockets.

Put a piece of cream-colored silk into an embroidery hoop and lay out silk embroidery threads of red, yellow, blue.

Follow the designs as drawn here, and remember to keep all stitches the same size. Here are two typical patterns used in the early

Han period, at the beginning of the second century B.C., or over 2100 years ago. Isn't it pretty? They made entire garments with such designs. And one gozzamer-light dress, measuring six feet by four feet, weighed less than one and a half ounce. That was before machine-made nylons!

MWT



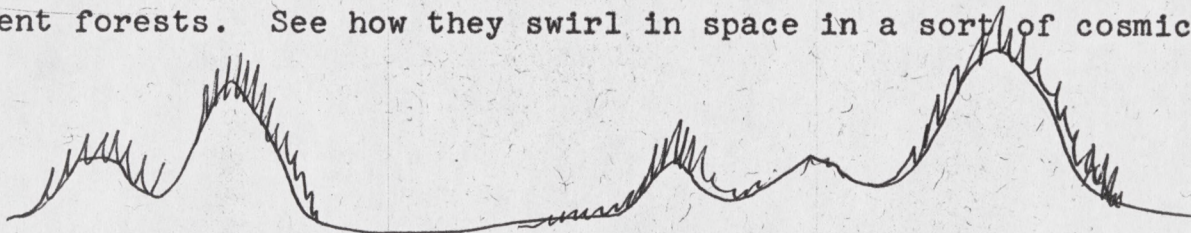
Han pottery stamp for tile decoration

We will make stamps today. When you impress stamps onto leather-hard clay tiles, you can decorate these tiles in a low relief, and if you are clever about it, you can make what looks like movies on the tiles. First let's make three stamps.

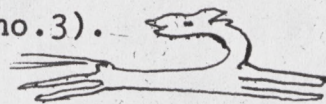
First make three clay plaques, affixing each with a convenient grip in back.

Now make the designs. Gouge them out of your clay plaque. Be aware of the depth so it makes sense when you reverse it onto the clay. Remember that what is hollow in the stamp, will be convex or rounded, in the tile.

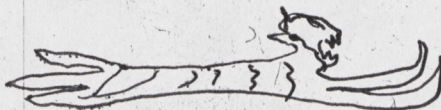
1) This one is the ancient way of drawing mountains. The hairy tops represent forests. See how they swirl in space in a sort of cosmic dance.



2) This is a horse in a "flying gallop". In real life he never stretches out his legs this way, two forward and two backwards. But you will see how fast it looks when you stamp him in motion. His head is turned back because he is being chased by the tiger (see no.3).



3) Here is the tiger, also running in a flying gallop. Make his mouth fierce and toothsome.



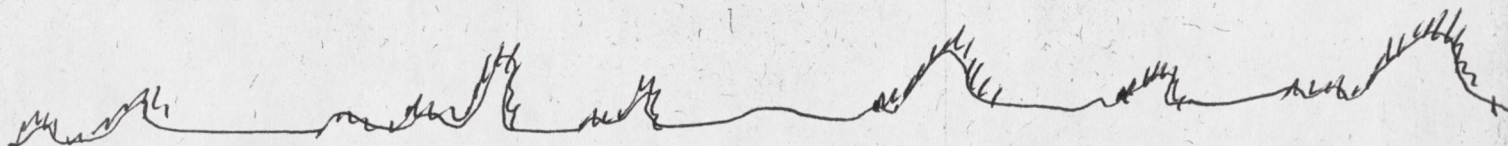
HAN

mural

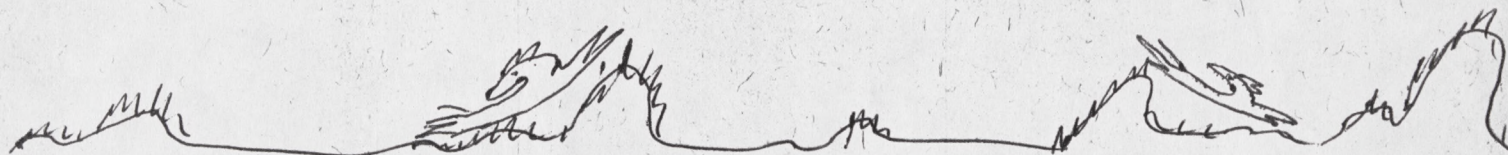
Today you can make many, many clay tiles first. These tiles will be set into a Han wall to decorate a passage way or veranda.

When all the tiles are cut, line them up and you are ready to stamp your ancient action movie onto them.

First govern the bottom of all the tiles, in a continuous fashion, with stamp 1) and you have a continuous "landscape" of undulating ~~land~~ mountains, background to set the ~~scene~~ for our "chase" scene.



Next stamp the horse at intervals, making sure to leave room for the tiger to follow in hot pursuit. You can adjust the stamp, tilting the horse up in one sequence and down in the next, to make appear to be galloping over hill and dale.



Next follow with the tiger, making sure the position is always meaningful in relation to the horse he is chasing. Now you have a scene like this.



When the tiles are fired and fixed in place along a wall, you can decorate the relief in red and white pigments if you like, coloring the horse in one color and the tiger in another.

HAN

Slab house with large courtyard

With many slabs let us make a large Han farm house. Let us give it many inter-connecting courtyard, something like this relief-rubbing. You see one part is for the father and mother to sit (on the floor on mats,) and the kitchen is way across the courtyard. Children play here safely in the courtyard, and animals like dogs and cranes are allowed. But pigs and ducks are in the outer courtyard. See?

FD 111 nothing
Ssu-chuan - tile

HAN

pig pen *sk.*

Often in Han tombs archaeologists find all the bits of farm life including pig pens, stocked with pigs. We can make them too.

We can make many pens to fill out our large Han farm house with courtyard and watch tower.

Let us make a duck pond, a chicken coop and a pig pen, and all the animals in them. Like this.


Cover with dark greenish / glaze.

HAN HOUSE: Northern tower

Slab and sculpture

In the north of China, the Hsiung-nu, a fierce nomadic tribe, used to raid Chinese villages and take the grains and livestock. For this reason houses in the not northern part of China all tend to have a watch tower where gna men with crossbows stood guard.

Let's make a northern watch-tower, with many stories, and put little figures armed with cross bows on them. Like this.

Cover with brownish glaze

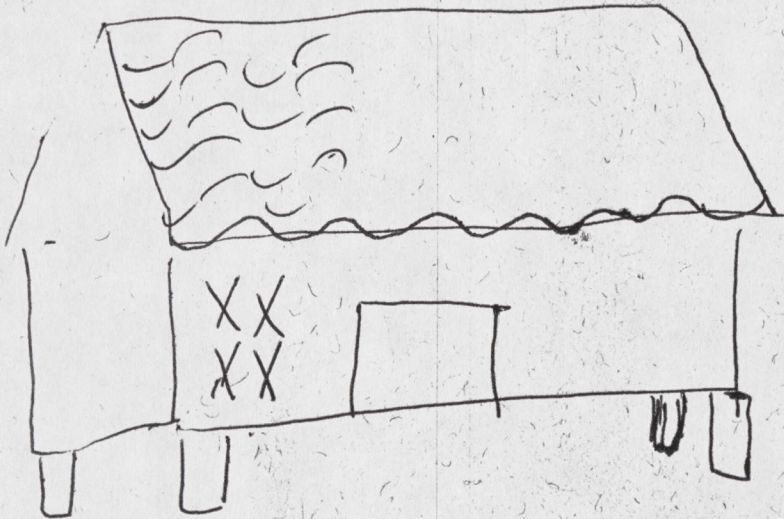
HAN

Pottery House: SOUTHERN

slab and sculpture

In the south of China there is much rain. SO the rooves of houses are long, with deep drainage grooves. Often they even stand on stilts to avoid the bottom rotting in the dampness. In Han times many such houses were made in pottery models and put into graves. We will make one such southern house. Let's criss-cross the walls with lattice work to give them some more ventilation, too. This way they will be very comfortable in the hot, humid climate.

Cover with greenish glaze



HAN The first compass

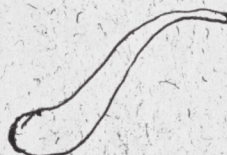
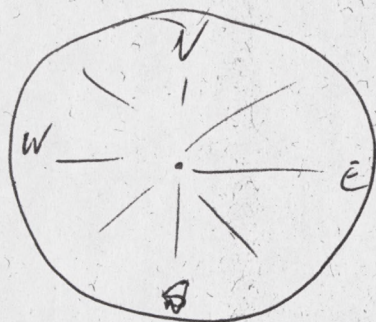
In Han times the Chinese had invented the compass. You can make one with some help from Teacher.

Polish lode stone, which is a stone with magnetic properties, into the shape of a Chinese spoon. And place it on a highly plo polished surface and it will turn.

The base can be glass, in this case, on the bottom of which you have written out N,S,E,W and drawn out some of the lines of a compass.

Place the lodestone in the middle, and if you turn the compass, the lodestone, your ancient "needle", will turn.

Neelham



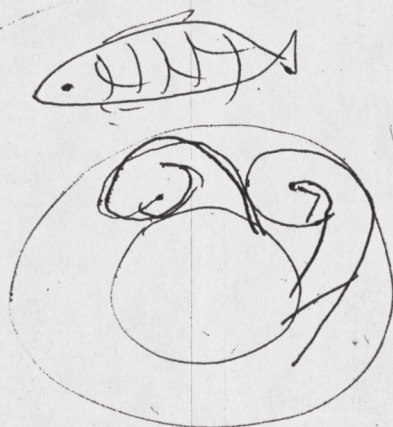
HAN

Funerary dish

By Han times the potter's wheel had been in use for a thousand years.
You can make a Han funerary dish on a potter's wheel.
Fire it to a low bisque.

Decorate with raw pigment, with glazes which are not fired again.
You can use red and black and white, and paint with a pointed brush.
See how this Han dish has both realistic (the fish) and stylized (the cloud patterns on the inside) doing so well together? Try it.

man ch'eng



T'ANG

Woodblock Printing

In the T'ang dynasty (c. 600 to 900 A.D.) woodblock printing came to
some 700 years before they appeared in Europe.
be used and books were printed. / Some of these were illustrated stories
the
whoch preached good behavior, and were something like comics we have
today. Printing, paper and ink were all invented in China.

We shall make a woodblock and print it on paper.

Write HAPPY BIRTHDAY, or MERRY CHRISTMAS, or what you like, in a fanciful
way, onto translucent paper or wax paper.

Cover a wood block or lenoleum block with some paste and put the paper
The ink on your paper should stain the wlock.
on it, upside down, reversing the writing. / Now carve around the
writing so that it stands out, and you have the block.

Now ink the raised letters with a brush dipped in China Ink, and press
a piece of paper on it. Rub gently. Peel off the paper and your writing will
be right-side up. You can run off as many prints as you like.

You can add pictures to the writing, or simply do pictures, or make
comic strips this way and entertain your friends.

T'ang Living in CH'ang-an

Study this map of Ch'ang-an, the T'ang capital in the 8th century. See all the Buddhist and Taoist temples, the pagodas and the lake. See the Eastern and Western Markets. Imagine the north-south avenues, almost 500 feet wide (New York's Fifth Avenue is only 100 feet wide, and a football field is 300 feet long.) The roads in CH'ang-an are often lined with beautiful trees, and you see ox-carts and horse-drawn carriages as well as people riding on camels and horseback. There is a Christian Nestorian Church, a Manichaean temple too.

If you were living in the 8th century in Europe you would want to come to live in Ch'ang-an because of all the fun and excitement there. Where would you live and what would you do? Write a short story.

T'ang

Narrative scroll

For a long time stories were painted on scrolls of silk or paper. The scroll is held in the hand and unrolled, as the story unfolds from right to left. Since the same people appear again and again, how can one indicate "later", "back home" and such ideas, without saying so, and without drawing brackets around each sequence as we do in comic strips?

The Chinese used landscape, bits of hills and trees, to indicate the passage of time ~~and~~ as well as distance. By T'ang times landscape looks more more like real landscape than it had in Han times, as you see. in this 8th century Buddhist scroll.

You too can make a narrative scroll and tell a story, ~~withnankmning~~ in the Chinese manner.

When the scroll is finished, it is mounted on a cloth or silk backing, and the left end is set into ~~th~~ a wooden cylinder which becomes the core around which the scroll is then wound. The right end is held straight by a thin piece of wood and ~~the~~ a silk cord from this end is wound around the scroll and fastened, like this.

In China all civil servants, that is ministers and government officials, got their jobs because they had passed three very difficult examinations. The last one was held in the capital and under the supervision of the Emperor himself.

The subjects for which a candidate had to be prepared included the classics, mathematics, music and poetry, sometimes archery. In the T'ang dynasty, the Emperor T'ai-tsung who reigned from 6____ to ~~625~~ 650 ? issued an Imperial Edict that henceforth the Imperial Examination shall include the art of calligraphy. So from ^{students} the late 7th century on, all ~~xxxxxxxofficials~~ practiced calligraphy.

Take a Chinese calligraphy brush and some liquid China or India ink and have ready some newspaper. On top of this spread some Chinese or Japanese writing paper and write these characters, in the order ~~in~~ ~~xxx~~ indicated. To make the line thick you simply press down a bit, and to make a point you lift your wrist up slowly till the entire brush is off the paper. Practice this first on the newspaper and then imitate the great Chinese calligrapher Yen Cheng-ch'ing who lived from _____ to _____.